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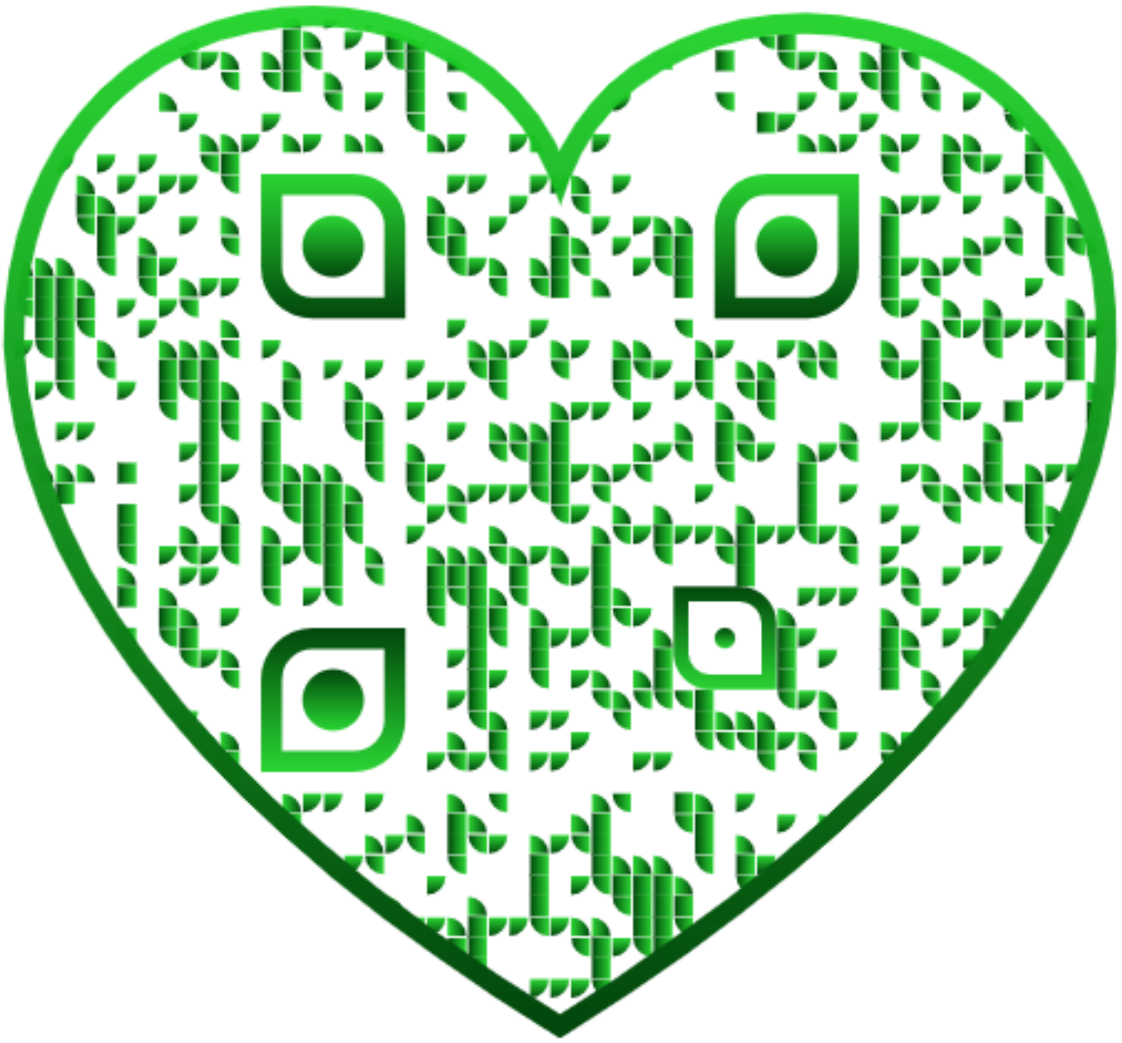

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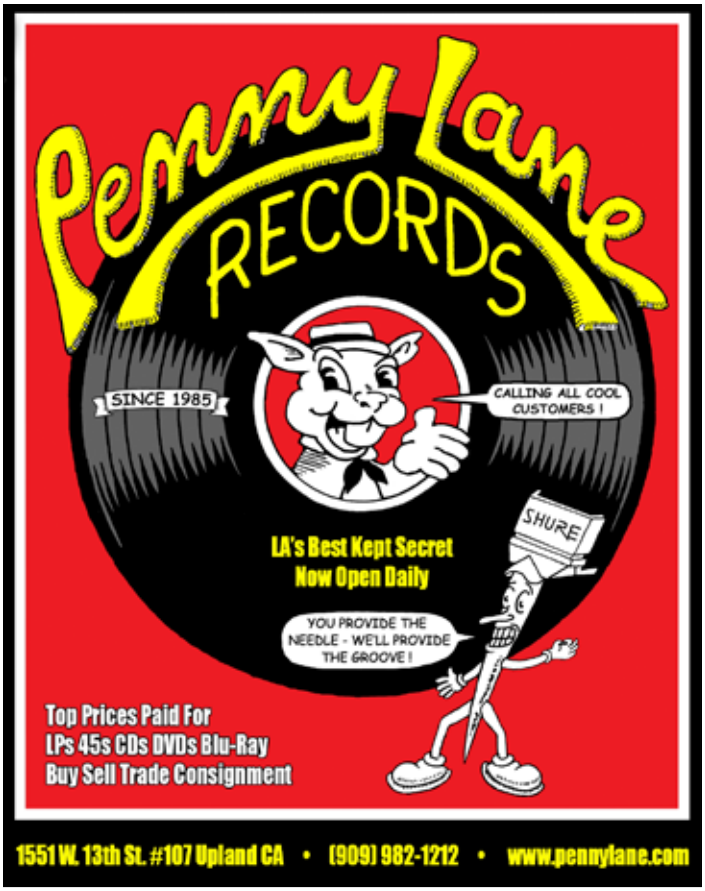
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ON THE COVER
Photo of Jimi Hendrix by Robert M.Knight

**"Yeah you know I just wonder,
I wonder, every place I go
My letter's gone dead, and my pencil
it won't write no more"**
-"My Pencil Won't Write No More," Muddy Waters

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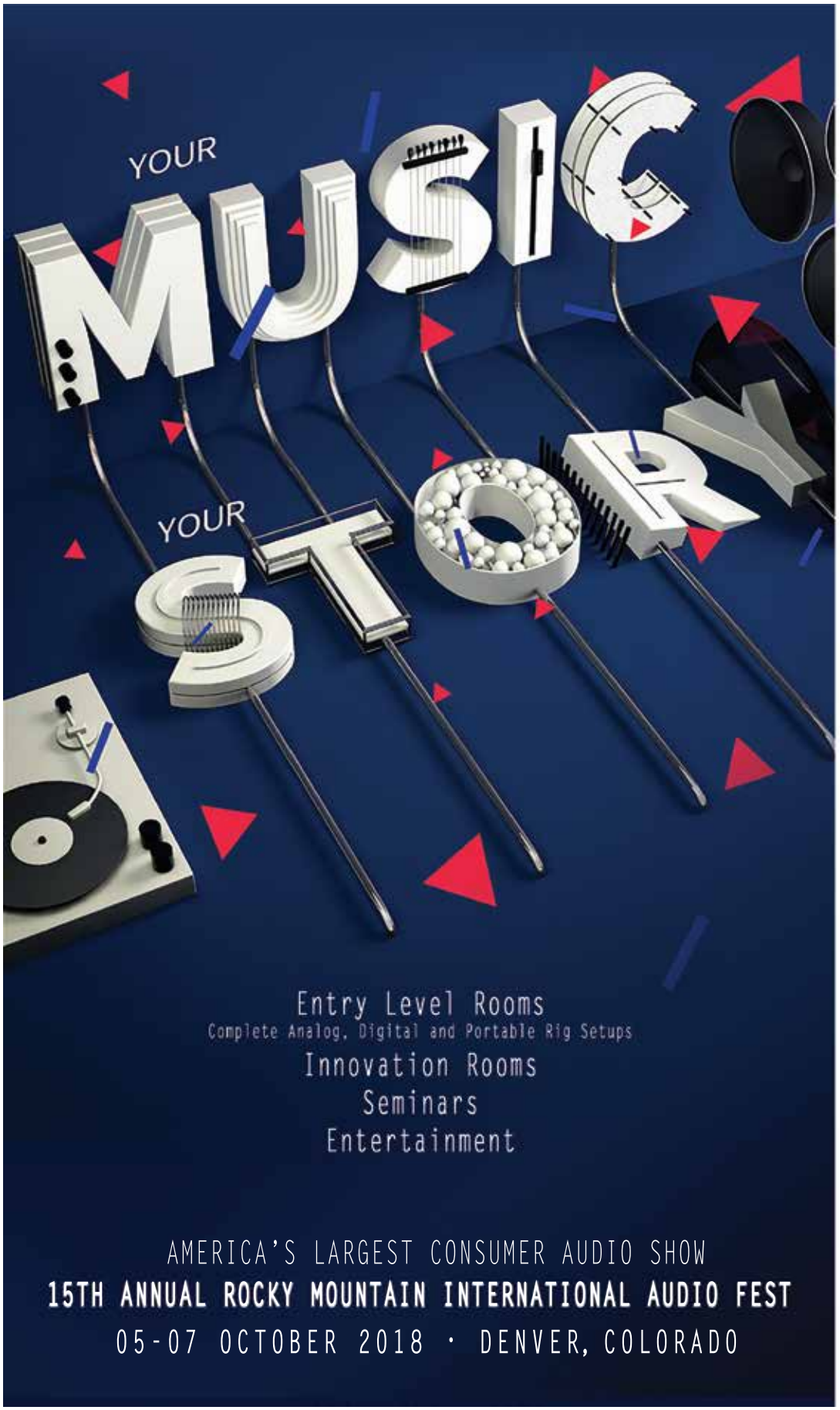

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KAPLAN'S KORNER

Good Equipment for Great Listening

Buying gear because of the music

DURING THIS LAST TEN years, as I approach the final third of my life (which I call the fuck-it phase), I have invested some serious time and money into my stereo equipment. And even though I marvel at the equipment itself and the engineering involved, to me, constructing a great stereo system is only essential for one reason — to be able to listen to great music in the best way possible.

Because, listening to music still moves me. That's always pretty cool. That's what makes it worth all that time and money.

A year ago, when the Prima Luna Dialogue Premium Preamp came to live with me, the listening experience moved into the oh-yes, I-can-hear-this and I-can-feel-this-phase. I could hear the difference between cartridges and cables. Every record I played sounded better than ever.

I was getting a lot more out of the Zesto Andros 1.2 phono stage. I was getting more out of everything. So, it's been a pretty good year at the *RCN* World HQ main listening studios (in a corner of my home office). Things sound amazing.

And it got even more interesting when the Jolida FOZ XT-R crosstalk reduction unit showed up. The FOZ XT-R reduces crosstalk caused when your stylus doesn't line up perfectly in the groove and/or within the cartridge itself.

Crosstalk is the stereo signal from the left side bleeding into the right side, and the right side bleeding into the left side. Hey, crosstalk happens. Using the FOZ XT-R entails hooking it up between the phono stage and preamp. I recommend using quality interconnects.

Calibration was simple and easy. The end result is the best stereo imaging I've ever experienced. I was looking for a weakness but could not find one. Sticking the FOZ XT-R in the signal path does not degrade the sound. Not to my ear.

What I heard was space between the instruments that are between the speakers. At $399 this is a worthy improvement. I don't think I can listen without it.

KELLY'S LOT

WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE Kelly Z record I've been listening to lately, *Rescue: Kelly Z at*

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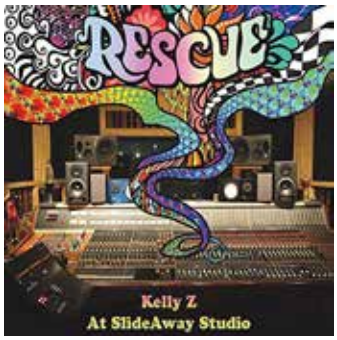
SlideAway Studio.

Kelly Z (Zirbes) is a Southern California-based blues singer who performs her ass off and who just came out with this lovely slab of wax featuring back up by a very tight band, Kelly's Lot.

The reason I bring her up is because I believe her. When she sings "Baby, it's you," I believe she means it. There is an authenticity to her voice that is compelling. I don't think it's just me either. A number of record store owners I have talked to really like this record. I think they believe her, too.

To quote Kelly Z, "I think it's gonna work out fine." More info at: kellyslot.com



INSIDE CAVE HOLLYWOOD

OUR ACCLAIMED AUTHOR AND pop culture musical historian Harvey Kubernik, who has written our cover stories for the last ten years has just published his 12th book, a literary and music anthology *Inside Cave Hollywood: The Harvey Kubernik Music InnerViews and InterViews Collection, Vol. 1* recently published by Cave Hollywood.

If you truly love the musical legacy of Chess, Motown and Brunswick Records, and dig Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Turtles, Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, Lenny Bruce, Andrew Loog Oldham, Carole King, Leonard Cohen, Elton John, Leon Russell, Paul Kantner, Bob Marley, Frank Sinatra and Antonio Carlos Jobim and the sixties sounds of East L.A. then this book is mandatory for your shelves or coffee table.

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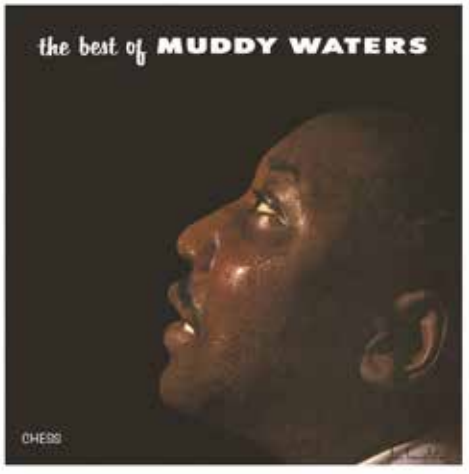
The Best of MUDDY WATERS

Harvey Kubernik talks to Marshall Chess, Robbie Robertson, Andrew Loog Oldham and Bill Wyman about the legacy of Muddy Waters and the 60th anniversary of his debut album, *The Best of Muddy Waters*

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK



FEW PIECES OF ART HAVE been as influential as Muddy Waters' seminal debut album *The Best of Muddy Waters*, a humble piece of vinyl released by the landmark Chess Records label in 1958 that served as The Big Bang for rock 'n' roll and the ensuing half century of modern popular culture.

On November 10, Geffen/UMe celebrated the forthcoming 60th anniversary of Waters' first album on Chess by reissuing *The Best of Muddy Waters* on vinyl in original mono for the first time in 30 years while also making it available for download and streaming for the first time ever, giving new and familiar listeners a reminder of the blues man's truly incandescent music.

Born McKinley Morganfield in Mississippi in 1915, Waters was initially a sharecropper playing his acoustic guitar for change and tips at rural plantation parties. He migrated to Chicago in 1943 where he brought together a pipeline of the city's top musicians to create, refine and define the modern blues. While he was undergoing this transformation, millions of rural Southern blacks were making the same journey, and their stories and music were working into the popular consciousness – and capturing the imagination of a restless teenage suburbia increasingly open to new things in the rebellious 1960s.

An assemblage of Waters 78 RPM recording made between 1948 and 1954 for Chess Records, The Best of Muddy Waters captured Waters' growth from acoustic artist to archetypical electrified band leader and charted the exciting evolution of blues.

Between the thematically fitting bookends of opener "I Just Want to Make Love to You" and unforgettable closer "I Can't Be Satisfied," the LP laid the blueprint for modern blues, rock and even country music, with monumental recordings like "Rollin' Stone," "Honey Bee" and "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man."

Waters' deeply emotional, often foreboding and always mysterious music helped inspire the imagination of acts such as the Rolling Stones – who take their name directly from Waters' music – the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, John Mayall, Fleetwood Mac, Savoy Brown Blues Band, Led Zeppelin, the Band and so many others.

These artists in turn took their love and appreciation

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RECORD COLLECTOR news

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of Waters to millions of listeners and aspiring musicians, creating a timeless feedback loop that continues with each generation. Waters' music arrived at important crossroads moments in both the blues man's personal life and that of the nation.

The re-release *The Best of Muddy Waters* gives fans a chance to examine this masterpiece again, a classic work of art that both inspires creative genius and entertains casual fans in ways that changed popular culture.

Marshall Chess, born in Chicago, Ill. on March 13, 1942, and was raised during the heyday of the independent record business. Leonard Chess had a piece of a record company named Aristocrat Records in 1947, and later in 1950 he brought his brother Phil into the fold and the brothers assumed sole ownership of the company and renamed it Chess Records.

Marshall "started" in the family business at age 7 initially accompanying his father Leonard on radio station visits. For sixteen years Marshall worked with his dad and his uncle Phil, doing everything from pressing records, applying shrink wrap and loading trucks to producing over 100 Chess Records projects, eventually heading up the label as President after the GRT acquisition in 1969. Over years the monumental Chess catalog has had various homes, including a 1975 sale to All Platinum Records, and eventually a couple of decades ago the Chess master tapes were purchased by MCA Records, now Universal Music Enterprises.

After departing from Chess Records in 1969, Marshall helped form and ran Rolling Stone Records for seven years. He helped create the Rolling Stones famous tongue and lip logo and was involved as Executive Producer on 7 Rolling Stone #1 albums during the 1970's.

In 2009 and 2010 I interviewed Marshall Chess.

MARSHALL CHESS

Q: Can you explain how your uncle and father, Polish immigrants, knew so much about music, the blues, and bringing it to our world?

A: Because they were very bright people. They worked in black businesses. My dad had a liquor store. I sat around my uncle and asked, 'everyone always asks me about music, and how did Chess get into music.' And, my uncle's vision is this. That in Poland, in the small Jewish ghetto town, there was no music. Then some guy got a windup Victrola. And the whole fuckin' village would stand underneath this guy's window when he played it. That was the first recorded music they heard.

"They come to America. My grandfather, who was here seven years prior in Chicago brings them. He had a scrap metal yard. Across the street from it, on the west side of Chicago, was a black gospel church. My uncle said that my dad and him were kids, and after work they would hear the bass drum and gospel singing with a piano, they would be fascinated. They would stand there and get punished for being late. 'Cause they were listening to the black music. That's where it began to me. For some reason it affected them.

"And then, when my uncle went into the army, my dad, I think because he was an immigrant got him near Maxwell Street, the black neighborhood. No prejudice. That's just it. No blacks in Poland. You don't get raised being prejudiced in Europe. You hate Nazis, but no blacks to hate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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"So, they had no problem, and they saw that there was this giant influx of blacks in Chicago, and they had money, and they were working. And my dad started with a liquor store. First he worked in a shoe shop. Berger's shoes. Then the liquor store, where he had a jukebox, and he was there 15-18 hours a day hearing blues. I watched the juke-boxes being serviced. They used to be controlled by the Italian gangsters of Chicago. They'd come and pick 'em up from us.

"Sonny Boy Williamson and Muddy Waters went to my Bar Mitzvah. A lot of black people were which was a very unusual event back then in 1955. The Chess recording artists were always writing about women problems and sex. That's all I ever heard from them when I was a kid. I saw some of these records being recorded. I sold them originally.

"Muddy Waters and B.B. King really dug white people doin' their stuff. Sonny Boy was very much into white people doin' his stuff. So was Howlin' Wolf.

"It blew our mind. Of course it was a fantastic thing. We loved it. And we never thought that could happen. It was a total fantasy. But we first noticed it with the Muddy At Newport album came out. I can remember we got all these orders from Boston on the Muddy album and we knew it was white people buying it. College kids. The first things we noticed as the album market developed.

Q: Muddy was a showman. I met him in 1978 when he gigged at the Roxy Theater in West Hollywood when he was making albums with Johnny Winter.

A: Muddy liked to drink. Muddy on stage and in the studio was the best. He was organized. He was a fuckin' leader. I always say this. People say 'what do you mean?' He was a fuckin' leader. Muddy was the reincarnation of a tribal chief, of a President, of a King. Such a powerful presence. I just loved him. He used to call me his white grandson. His wife Geneva used to send me fried chicken wrapped in foil. Muddy once wrote a poem to a girl for me that I gave when I was in high school. I always say this and people laugh but most of what I discussed with these guys was about sex. That was the main thing on their mind. Look at their lyrics.

Q: Why are the records of Chess gifts?

A: The best explanation is, this may sound way out. It contains magic. The most apparent magic that we can see or experience is music. Let's face it. Music changes the way you feel. That's magical. Chess Records for some reason was a magnet for amazing artistry. All these magicians came to Chess. And we were able to capture it. And the method of recording. And it's something that can be experienced through audio. The music has stood up without a cinematic aspect like video.

"As I grew older, and was a person of the hippie generation, and discovered things like meditation, psychedelic drugs, Buddhism. I realized what was happening in the early Chess studio was like a high Buddhist monk meditation manager. Because when you recorded in mono and two-track with 5 or 6

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players and a singer there wasn't any correction possible. One of the main jobs as a producer was like a meditation manager master. He had to get the band locked together to go down. I remember when they were teaching me to produce they always would say, 'when the motherfucker fucks up you got to embarrass him and tell him to play that shit right over and over.'

Q: Who buys Chess Records reissues this century?

A: Today the consumers are collectors, man, because they have credit cards. Who are blues fans? They are usually Jewish guys. Jewish with plastic. (Laughs). We're kibitzing. They're always been middle class. They'd buy 30 fuckin' copies of Muddy Waters at a time when they first discovered him. Now I go around the fuckin' world and talk about Chess and people kiss my ass. It's always a pimply faced, middle aged, balding Jewish guy. Blues nerds! It's hysterical to me! (Laughs).

Q: Can you talk about the Chess studio?

A: We had fabulous engineers. Ron Malo and Malcolm Chism. They were the two best engineers. Ron came from Detroit. He had worked on Motown studios and he was a big part. Before Ron, we had these two Weiner brothers, who actually built the studio. It was a basic classic studio design, with the echo chamber in the basement, very small control room. One of the secrets of the Chess studio was not the studio but our mastering. We had a little mastering room with a lathe. Eventually we had a Neumann lathe. The first one was an American one. We did our own mastering and had these Electrovoice speakers on the wall. The great part about that room that when it sounded right in that mastering room it would pop off the radio. That's what it was all about. And the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, later Fleetwood Mac had to make visits there.

"I'll tell you a story about the Chess artists that sort of sums up the 'blues nerds.' This is going back to the '60s, right. Driving me crazy. I knew the blues fans, the guys from Blues Horizon, Mike and Richard Vernon. I knew them well and loved them. They would come to Chicago and I would show them the original Chess master book, and they'd put their fuckin' hands on it like it was the bible.

"So, this blues nerd was driving me crazy. 'I've got to know what kind of microphone Little Walter uses to get that sound.' It drove me crazy.

"Just so happened, Walter was recording. And I knew Walter from being a very little kid. I said, 'Walter. This crazy motherfucker is driving me crazy. He wants to know what kind of mike you use?' 'Are you crazy, motherfucker? Whatever microphone I didn't pawn that week!' [Laughs].

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

The Best of Muddy Waters

TRACK LISTING:

SIDE A

1 I Just Want To Make Love To You
2 Long Distance Call
3 Louisiana Blues
4 Honey Bee
5 Rollin' Stone
6 I'm Ready

SIDE B

1 Hoochie Coochie
2 She Moves Me
3 I Want You To Love Me
4 Standing Around Crying
5 Still A Fool
6 I Can't Be Satisfied

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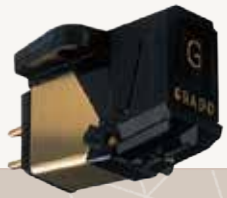

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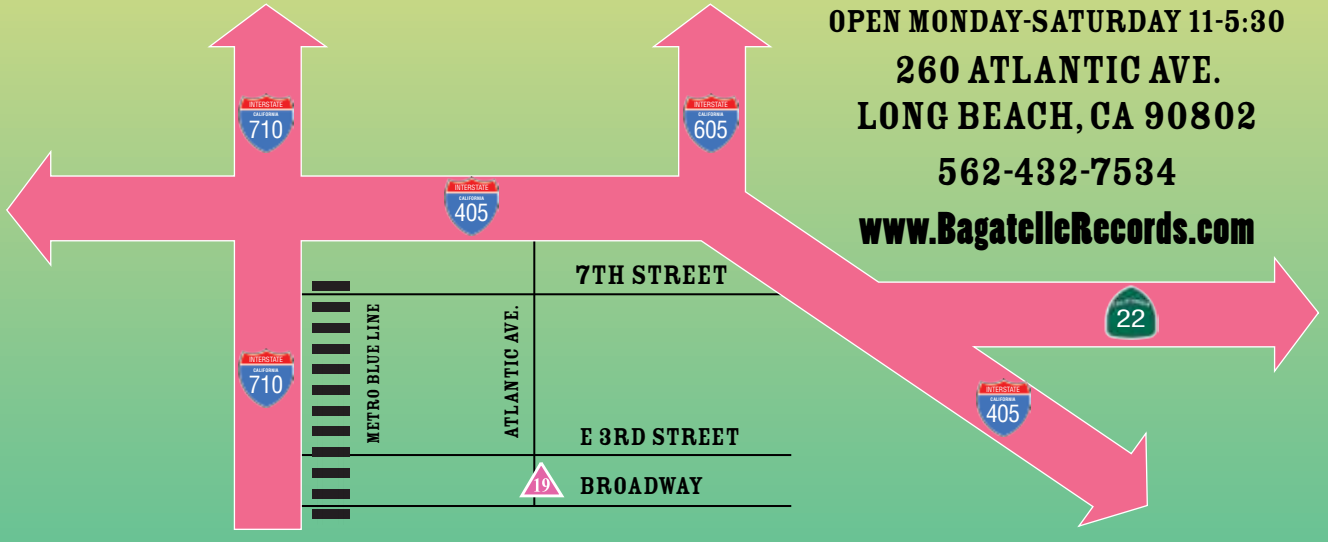

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

"You get it. These artists were great and would have been great in any studio. It was the artistry, the playing. The studio was great and we captured a sound, and it had a sound, but it was our artists that made that sound."

The Rolling Stones came to Chess to record three times in 1964 and 1965.

ANDREW LOOG OLDHAM

AUTHOR AND DEEJAY, ANDREW Loog Oldham, who managed and produced the band's recordings from 1963-1967 emailed me memories about Chess Records and working in the fabled studio.

"It was Chess records, the vinyl actuals that re-united Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on Dartford Station in 1962. It was Chess Records, the company, the work that drove Brian Jones to form the Rollin' Stones. It was Chess Records — the wave, that came over me in the Station Hotel in Richmond in April ' 63 when I first saw the Stones and we began our way of life together. Chess was always the underbelly of the Stones beast; the fuel that charged the engine, even after they became their own brand.

"The first U.S. tour by the Stones was not the Beatles tour. We had a cult following in the cities and were abandoned in the sticks. The boys needed cheering up. I could not have them de-planning in London looking like the brothers glum.

"I called Phil Spector from Texas where the Stones had just supported a band of performing seals and asked him to get us booked just as soon as possible into Chess studios. Phil or Marshall Chess called back and said he'd set up two days of recording time, two days hence. Chicago was a piece of heaven on earth for the Stones. The earth had been scorched on most of our mid-American concert stopovers. We hadn't set any records; we didn't yet have the goods, apart from a trio of wonderful one-offs, 'I Wanna Be Your Man,' 'You Better Move On' and 'Not Fade Away' we had yet to ..find our vinyl legs.

"2120 South Michigan Avenue housed Chess Records and Studios and in two days the group put down some thirteen tracks — their most relaxed and inspired session to date-moved, no doubt, by our newfound ability to sell coals to Newcastle. Who would have thought a bunch of English kids could produce black R 'n' B in the States? And here they were in the sanctum sanctorum of Chicago blues, playing in the lap of their gods. The ground floor was a gem, as was Chess engineer Ron Malo. He treated them just like... musicians.

"Nothing sensational happened at Chess except the music. I was producing the sessions in the greatest sense of the word: I had provided the environment in which the work could get done. The Stones' job was to fill up the available space correctly and this they did. This was not the session for pop suggestions; this was the place to let them be. Oh, I may have insisted on a sordid amount of echo on the under-belly figure on 'It's all Over Now,' but that was only ear candy to a part that was already there.

"I can remember being impressed with the order of things and how quietness and calm got things done. I remember meeting Leonard and/or perhaps Phil Chess, and being cognizant of the fact that there was no suppressive limey stymieing from the head office to the factory floor. There was just a factory floor and a very relaxed combo of artists, musicians, engineers, and salesmen all at one with each other and getting their jobs done and royalty Cadillacs royally driven."

BILL WYMAN

LAST DECADE I INTERVIEWED Rolling Stones' bassist Bill Wyman. We chatted about the Stones' visit to Chess.

"Keith talks about how he saw Muddy painting the walls at Chess. It's funny. It gets headlines and it gets a laugh. Willie [Dixon] tried to pawn a song on us and Muddy did help us in with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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gear. It's in my diary that day.

"The greatest thing about Chess Records wasn't the recording, or having Buddy Guy walk in, Muddy, and Chuck Berry coming and saying 'Swing on, gentlemen, you are sounding most well, if I may say so," and he knew he was going to make some money. But it was being told we could go down in the cellar and pick some albums if we wanted. Racks of Little Walter albums we had never seen. That was the magic of Chess for us.

"We had recorded at Chess for a couple of dates, a few times. When we came into L.A. we went to RCA. We walked into the studio and it was too big. We were really worried. We were intimidated. We were used to recording in little places like Regent Sound. The studio was like this hotel room. And Chess wasn't very big either. Suddenly we're at RCA and it's enormous. It was like Olympic (in England) later. But we solved that same problem. We thought 'God, we can't record in here. We're gonna get the wrong sound.'

"But Andrew had this brain wave and he put us all in the corner of one room, turned all the lights down, and just tucked us all around in a little small circle. And we forgot about the rest of the room and the height of the ceiling. And we just did it in this little corner with engineer Dave Hassinger."

"When I heard these early Sun and Chess Records," Robbie Robertson of the Band recollected to me in a 2016 interview, "I thought, 'what is going on here? The sound coming out of Chess Records in Chicago. What kind of a room is that? What is this magic?'"

RICK DANKO

IN NOVEMBER 2016 RHINO ENTERTAINMENT released four new 40th Anniversary Editions of the Band's *The Last Waltz* in various CD, Blu-ray, and vinyl formats.

I attended the monumental event and stunned by Muddy Waters' two-song segment.

In 1977 and '78 I interviewed Rick Danko, the bassist of the Band for *Melody Maker*.

"At *The Last Waltz* we were the perfect house band. Even the rehearsals were incredible. Preparing for the gig was a trip in itself. For four days we did nothing but play music.

"The Band has always been into precision, like a fine car. We didn't take it easy during preparation. No way was I gonna walk out on stage and wing it next to Joni Mitchell. And Muddy Waters...

"Wait 'till you see Muddy in the film," warned Rick. "We also did a version of 'Mannish Boy' at the hotel and nobody had a tape recorder. I was playing next to him and got chills. I think for Muddy and for Ronnie Hawkins, they arrived at the high point in their lives that night."

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

IN 2016 I SPOKE WITH ROBBIE ROBERTSON for *Record Collector News* magazine about *The Last Waltz* and Muddy Waters. I asked about Muddy's moment on celluloid.

"Because now when I'm watching it I'm also hearing it that way. And the power of it. And what this man, and you look at him and say, 'This guy...I don't know what the Rolling Stones would have done, or a lot of music would have existed if it hadn't been for this guy.' And look at him, and can't you see why?

"It is one of the high points for me in this. And just talking about pedal to the metal, and pulling the trigger.

"And Muddy must have been about 65 or so, he came out and he was the daddy of the whole Delta Blues scene for sure, but such a gentleman. He came out there with people who are so large and their own music, and held his own at 64, or 65, and didn't take a step backwards. There's a true master," underlined Robertson.

I had seen Muddy previously in clubs in Hollywood like The Troubadour in 1966, the Kaleidoscope in July 1968 and a few shows at Ash Grove in 1971. However, being at *The Last Waltz* was a revelation just seeing and hearing Muddy with the best sound system, the incredible lights, a huge stage, and lots of people behind him.

"Well you know there was something to the idea of when all these people are in this place and you're coming out and doing one song, or two songs, or whatever you're doing, and then there's all these people who had been out before you, and then all these people coming after you, all of that, it made everybody just rise to an occasion musically, spiritually that sometimes you don't know you even have in yourself," Robbie stressed. "That's one of the things I think, 'Thank God this was captured in such a beautiful way, too.' And that you can really see this and really go inside it, and really feel a part of the whole thing. Because it's a movie. It isn't just a video of something, where you looking at it and saying, 'Is this fake?' 'Is this real?' 'Is this being fluffed up like a television commercial?'

"This is the real thing in a setting of such respectful elegance and everything that when I was working on it I did think of Muddy Waters coming out there between all of these people and rock the very foundation of music in that whole place that night.

"This was like an outstanding experience. Sometimes I had to just catch myself not to be standing there with my mouth open."

CELESTE GOYER

"MUDDY'S APPEARANCE IN *THE LAST WALTZ* film was my first introduction to the blues, and his performance of 'Mannish Boy' went off in me like a bomb," admitted poet and artist Celeste Goyer.

"I'd never seen anything like the command he had on stage — he looked out over the audience and knew it was his. People talk about authenticity in rock 'n' roll or the sexual appeal of a lead singer in their 20's — this man in his 60's had all that — but cranked up to 12, like an old, scarred lion that can still turn on the power and chase off rivals anytime he pleases."

DR. JAMES CUSHING

"I SAW MUDDY WATERS IN *THE LAST WALTZ* and earlier at the Ash Grove in 1971," remembered deejay and poet Dr. James Cushing.

"His set began with his band doing a couple of instrumental numbers. And his lead guitarist was playing a Fender Jaguar through a wah-wah pedal. Muddy was seated and played slide.

"When I was exposed to his voice and slide work solos in person, I got from that moment the same thing a bunch of privileged white suburban kids got which was sense of total authenticity and integrity.

"This was popular music in which the bull shit quotient was as close to zero. Muddy did a song from 1949, before I was born, the same decade as World War 2.

"I heard a voice where history is speaking to me. I jumped on a table in the room because I couldn't control myself to do otherwise. I had just learned in the most dramatic possible way that adulthood was not a drag. That it was possible to imagine an adulthood that was not as uselessly fucked up that my alcoholic parents had modeled for me," Cushing confessed.

"Muddy and Chess Records are the bricks from which rock 'n' roll is built.

"In Chicago you have Jewish Polish emigrants form Chess Records. In New York there's Blue Note, started by Austrian Jewish emigrants, and in Hollywood then you have Capitol Records in Hollywood with Stan Kenton, which has a more complex label history with songwriters as principals and the movie industry.

"Those were the three great centers of American music in the late 1940's and early '50's. And they need to be seen, I think, as examples of American cultural diversity at its best."

Harvey Kubernik is the author of 12 books. His debut literary music anthology *Inside Cave Hollywood: The Harvey Kubernik Music InnerViews and InterViews Collection, Vol. 1* was published in December 2017, by Cave Hollywood. Kubernik is also writing and assembling a multi-voice narrative book on The Doors *Summer's Gone* published in mid-March by Other World Cottage Industries.

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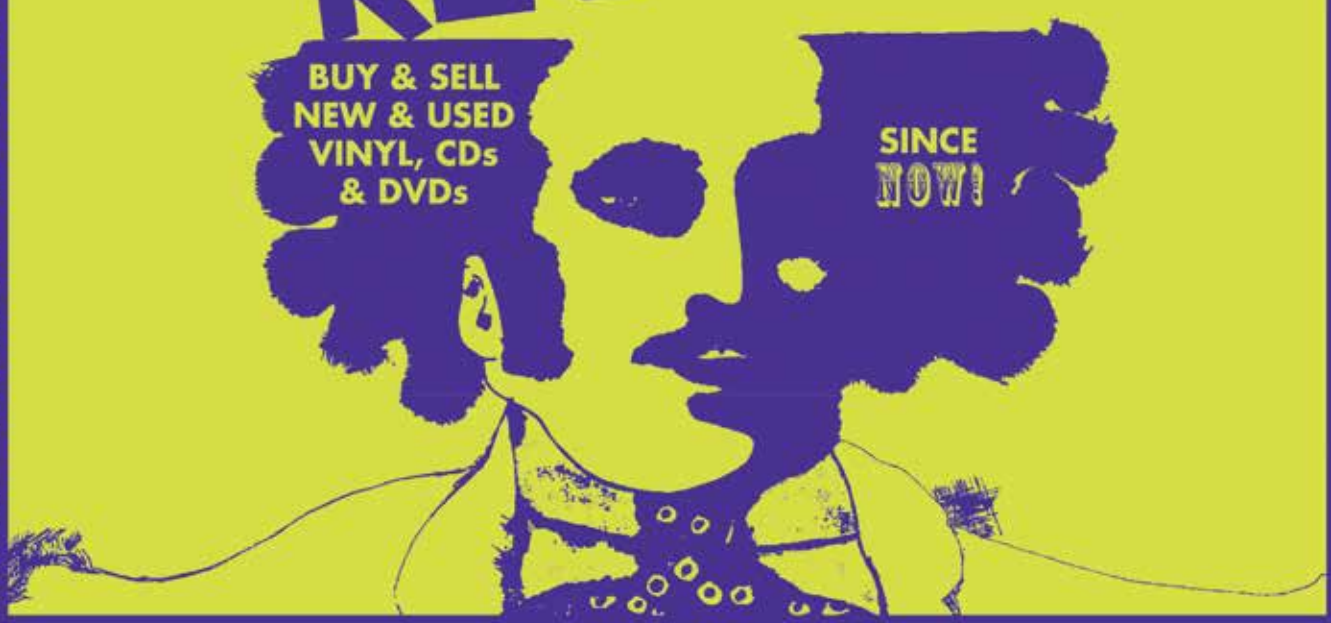

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Detroit Rising: A Cosmic Jazz Funk Adventure

BY *RCN* STAFF

DOWN JAZZ RECORDS HAS FORWARDED the funk. *Detroit Rising: A Cosmic Jazz Funk Adventure*, on sea-green vinyl, is the latest tentacle of the George Clinton P-Funk octopus of mammoth proportions. While the man himself continues to tour and excite new generations, his family of musicians — who have been the bulwark of progressive funk for decades — has banded together under the nom de plume of *Detroit Rising* to create one for the ages. Even the old man's granddaughter, Tonysha Nelson, sings with breathy sexuality. Jam-Band Funk? (Four out of 10 rock on for nine minutes.). Future Jazz? Cosmic Fusion Slop? Call it what you will but as engineered and mixed by Richie Beretta (Beyonce), Tatsuya (A Tribe Called Quest) and Mark Santangelo (Childish Gambino), the sound itself doesn't flinch, providing a groin-shaking bass while not losing one iota of that attention-to-detail treble.

The A-List musicians who lined up for this pioneering project all have superstar gigs so it had to be recorded on the fly in Detroit, Hollywood, New York City, Baltimore and Florida. Three years in the making, Creative Producer David Schwartz has helped fused funk, soul, rock 'n'roll, techno, world, electronica, dance, pop and jazz.

Prince singer Sue Ann Carwell, Lady Gaga bassist Kern Brantley, Herbie Hancock guitarist Blackbyrd McNight, Parliament-Funkadelic Moog Synthesist Danny Bedrosian and bassist Lige Curry are 5 of 13 musicians who sacrificed their own touring schedules to be a part of this. "Little Bit" takes 9:32 to get its jam across. (It's been edited down as the first single and is as catchy as a tattoo on the brain.) Composer-vocalist, B Vintage took time out from his work with major stars to sing this jam that's accentuated by a Hendrixian solo by Duminie Deporres.

"What's That You Heard" mashes up the Ohio Players, blaxploitation Superfly-styled cinema, Sly & The Family Stone and James Brown in a joint of groovalicious proportions, spearheaded by P-Funk drummer Benzell Cowan. Saxophonist Greg Thomas squeaks and squawks in a spiraling effervescent moon shot but it's P-Funk bassist Lige Curry who almost steals the show with his accentuated pop. Then there's P-Funk drummer Gabe Gonzalez knocking himself out with fill after fill. Greg Thomas blows his brains out right through his sax, double- and triple-tracked like a horn-section unto himself. Prince vocalist Sue Ann Carwell's "Fly To Freedom" was never more in tune with today's dystopian zeitgeist. "We gotta find a new way to love each other," she whispers under her breath in-between verses and, man, no greater truth was ever told.

The album ends as it started: with a funk jam for the ages, recorded at Motown, and, as is often the case with this P-Funk crew, no vocals are needed. "Song #4 Part 2 Funk Instrumental" would be the centerpiece of most projects. Here, it's a goodbye, and it only makes one want to push play one more time.

Detroit Rising: A Cosmic Jazz Funk Adventure will open doors to a 2018 revolution of black sound, refusing to be compartmentalized, analyzed or even asked why. Showcases are in the works as are dance remixes from Joey Negro & Sean McCabe as well as Kaidi Tatham in the U.K. and EVM 128 of the electronica jazz collective known as "Worldwide FM DJ's Co-Op Selectors Assemble."

Events at record stores start April 6, 7 and 8 leading up to Record Store Day (April 21) across California, US, UK and Europe. Let the party begin! This is what happens when an entrepreneurial-minded New York samba drummer who is also a producer, composer and arranger, David Schwartz, gives in to his big ideas. His love for this music pours out. You can hear it in the grooves. And this family of P-Funksters, seasoned studio pros, rap and jam instrumentalists made it into a labor of love.

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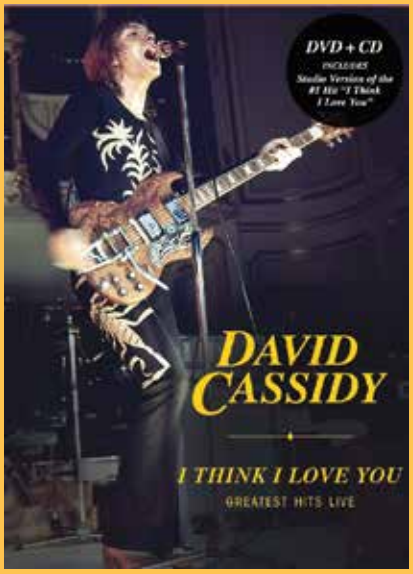

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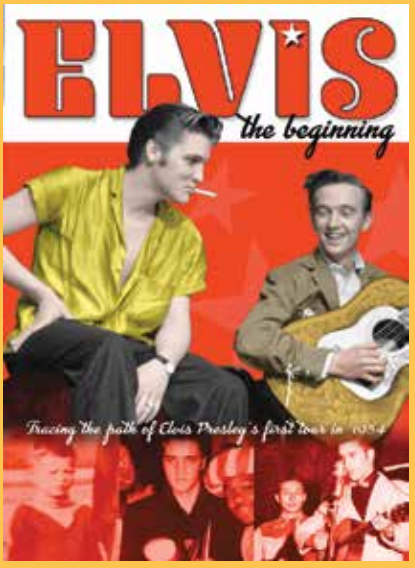

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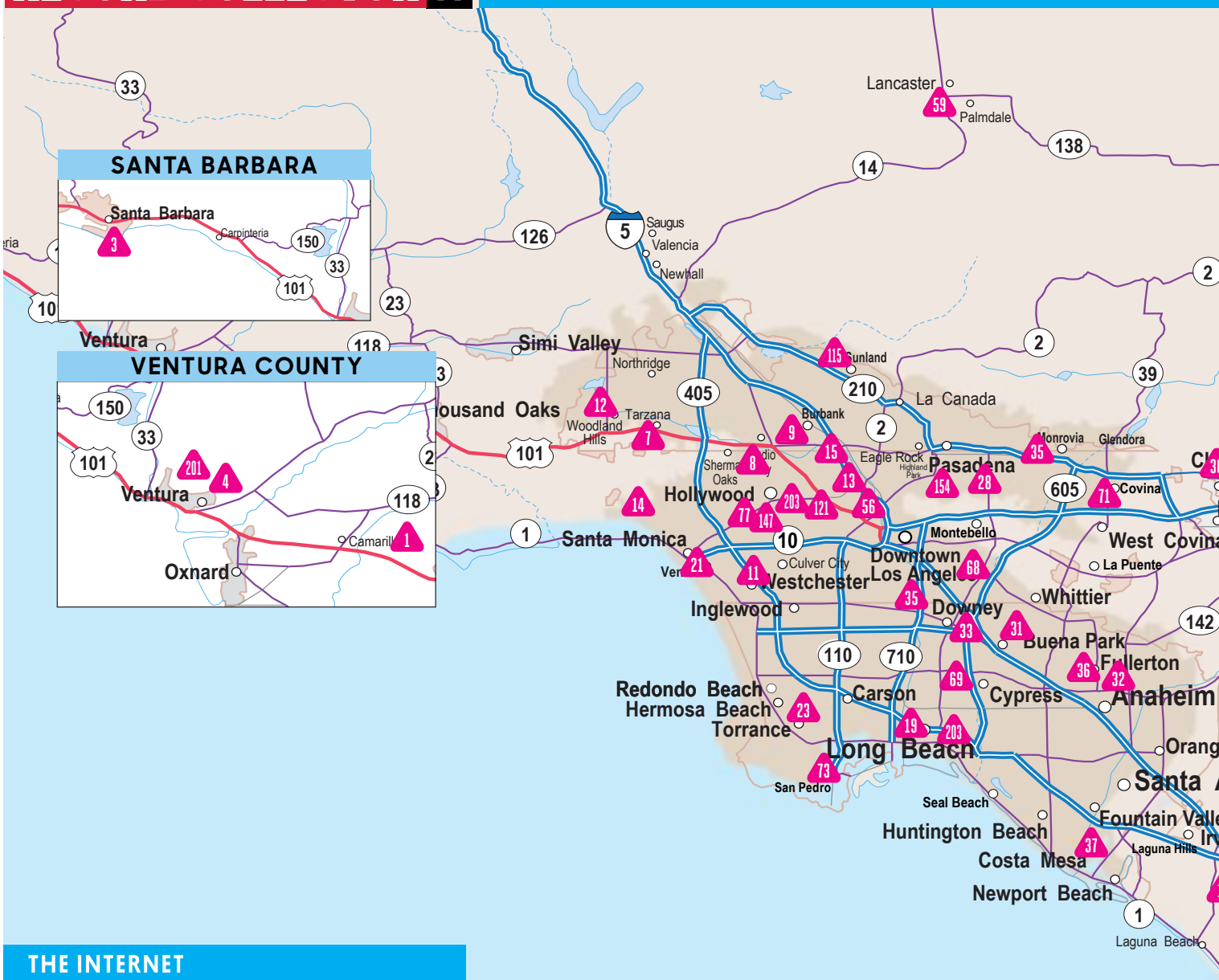

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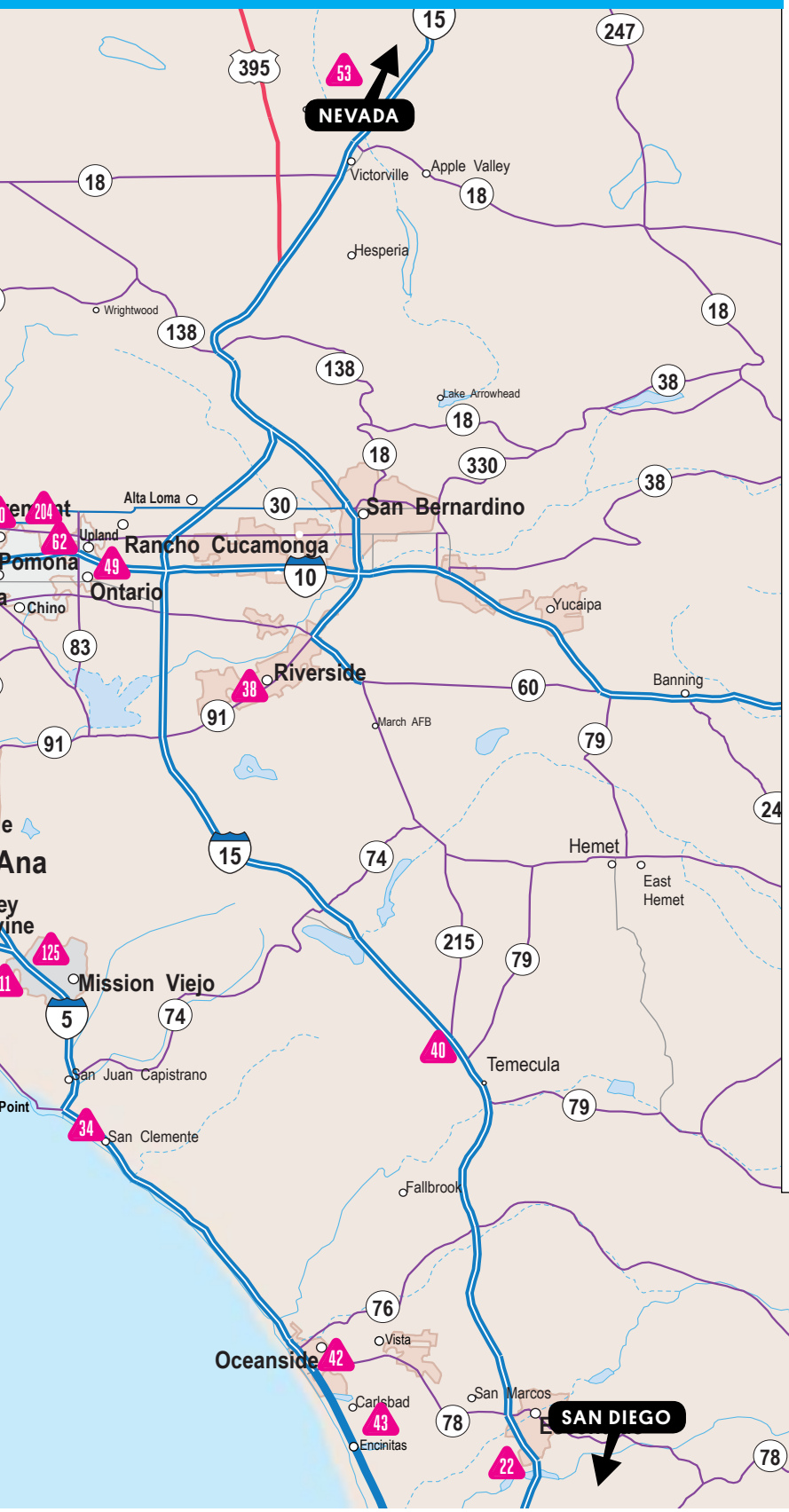

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201	Jockamo Records	522 E. Santa Clara St	Ventura	93001

ANTELOPE VALLEY

59	Voodoo Vinyl	765 W Lancaster Blvd	Lancaster	93534

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY/BURBANK/GLENDALE

7	CD Trader	18926 Ventura Bl	Tarzana	91356
8	FreakBeat Records	13616 Ventura Blvd	Sherman Oaks	91423
9	Atomic Records	3812 W. Magnolia	Burbank	91505
12	Shelley's Stereo	22102 Clarendon Street	Woodland Hills	91367
115	MediaWorks Records	7830 Foothill Blvd	Sunland	91040
13	Mono Records	1610 East Colorado	Glendale	91205

LOS ANGELES / SANTA MONICA

11	Soundsations	8701 La Tijera Blvd	Westchester	90045
14	Record Surplus	12436 Santa Monica Bl	W. Los Angeles	90025
15	Rockaway Records	2395 B Glendale Blvd	Silverlake	90039
21	Angel City Records & Books	218 Pier Ave	Santa Monica	90405
56	Caveman Vintage Music	3231 N Main St	Los Angeles	90031
77	Headline Records	7706 Melrose Ave	Los Angeles	90046
121	Ahead Stereo	7428 Beverly Blvd	Los Angeles	90036
154	Gimme Gimme Records	5810 N Figueroa St	Los Angeles	90042
35	George Meyer Audio	4844 W. Jefferson Blvd	Los Angeles	90016
147	High Fidelity	1027 North Orange Drive	Los Angeles	90038

LONG BEACH / SOUTH BAY

19	Bagatelle	260 Atlantic Ave	Long Beach	90802
23	PM Sounds	1115 Sartori Avenue	Torrance	90501
73	JDC's Record Shop	447 W 6th Street	San Pedro	90731

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY AREA

28	Pasadena City College (PCC)	1570 E. Colorado	Pasadena	91106
71	Kaos Records	1044 N Citrus	Covina	91722
68	Sounds of Music	4956 E Whittier Blvd	Los Angeles	90044
69	Sounds of Music	7922 Rosecrans Ave #S	Paramount	90723

CLAREMONT / POMONA / ALTA LOMA

30	Rhino Records	235 Yale Ave	Claremont	91711
62	Penny Lane Records	1551 W. 13th St. #107	Upland	91786
204	Upscale Audio	2058 Wright Ave	La Verne	91750

ORANGE COUNTY

31	Greater Orange County Record Show	8530 Stanton	Buena Park	90620
32	Burger Records	645a S. State College Blvd.	Fullerton	92831
33	Far West Record Supply	SEE OC Record Show	Buena Park	90620
34	Moldy Toes Records	221 S Ola Vista	San Clemente	92672
36	Black Hole Records	108 North Harbor Blvd	Fullerton	92832
37	Factory Records	440 E 17th Street	Costa Mesa	92627
203	Creme Tangerine	2930 Bristol St K2	Costa Mesa	92627

RIVERSIDE COUNTY / PALM SPRINGS / PALM DESERT

38	Mad Platter	1223 University Ave	Riverside	92501
40	Old Town Records	42012 Main Street	Temecula	92590
49	The Record Mission	129 Euclid Ave	Ontario	91762

SAN DIEGO / COUNTY

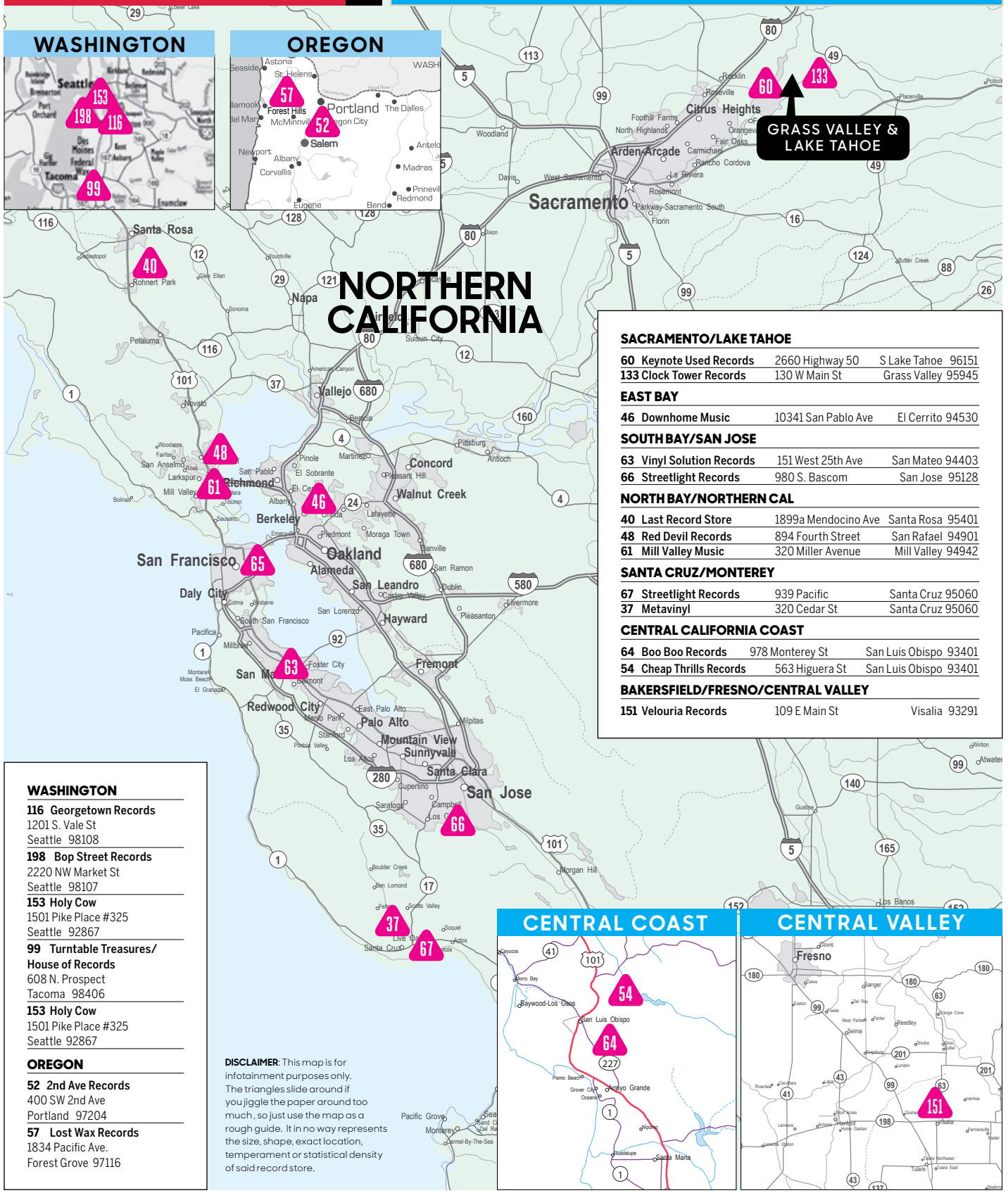
42	Spin Records	370 Grand Ave	Carlsbad	92008
43	Lou's Records	434 N. Coast Highway 101	Encinitas	92024
22	M Theory Records	915 W. Washington Ave	San Diego	92103

BEYOND CALIFORNIA

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

53	Wax Trax	2909 S. Decatur	Las Vegas	89102

RECORD STORE FINDER MAP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The life, music and costumes of Stevie Nicks, rock's still-reigning witchy queen

Gold Dust Woman is a cradle-to-golden years slog through the singer's life

GOLD DUST WOMAN: THE BIOGRAPHY OF STEVIE NICKS
BY STEPHEN DAVIS
ST MARTIN'S PRESS

BY SUZANNE RUSH

RALPH ARVESEN / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Stevie Nicks at the Frank Erwin Center in Austin, Texas on her 24 Karat Gold Tour, 2017

Being a Stevie Nicks fan has always required that one reconcile the conflict between thinking that her Sisters of the Moon act was somehow simultaneously empowering and a little embarrassing.

On the one hand, there has been much to like about this singer and songwriter who first projected her gauzy light into the world in 1975 as the de facto front-person for the rock band Fleetwood Mac. Within the band's framework — and later, working with producer Jimmy Iovine and musicians Tom Petty and Don Henley — her vague poetic imagery was complimented by a real rock power that turned her ladylike musings on love, loss, witches and gypsies into her own variety of feminist anthems. Throughout the '70s and '80s, clad in diaphanous shawls and platform boots, the diminutive singer made being female seem mysterious and powerful. It was no wonder that her fans were mostly young women who copied her thrift-store, hippie princess wardrobe and thrilled to songs they could have pulled from their own velvet-bound journals.

On the other hand, that Nicks' early heyday coincided with the emergence of punk rock also made her seem slightly silly and retrogressive. She was the tea and sympathy that girls sipped in secret when they needed a good cry, but not what they admitted to in the mosh pit. Still, there was an authenticity to her constantly-twirling version of being a woman. She was the contrasting lace to the leather of contemporaries like Chrissy Hynde or Patti Smith.

However, by the grungy 1990s her brand of girl-rock would become largely irrelevant. As Steven Davis tells it in his unauthorized, 2017 biography of the singer, *Gold Dust Woman: The Biography of Stevie Nicks* — a cradle-to-golden-years look at, arguably, America's preeminent rock goddess — this diminution of her flame was as much due to changing tastes as it was to the singer's struggles with that old rock 'n' roll bugaboo, drug addiction. But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Gold Dust Woman, begins with the childhood of Stephanie Nicks, born in 1948 and raised in various cities across the Southwestern U.S. (Arizona, Utah, California) by parents who recognized their daughter's talent from the start. When she was five-years-old, her grandfather, a bar singer, began taking her to saloons to provide harmonies to his country stylings. By the age of 16 she was writing her own songs. "'I knew from that second on that I was not going to sing a lot of other people's songs. I was going to write my own.'"

During her last year of high school, in San Mateo, California, she met Lindsay Buckingham, who recruited her to sing with his band, Fritz. The sextet played increasingly high-profile gigs throughout the Bay Area, first at college campuses and later opening for acts like Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin at Bill Graham-produced concerts.

But, by 1971, along with Hendrix and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Joplin, Fritz was kaput. By then Nicks and Buckingham had become romantically involved and headed to Los Angeles to record as a duo.

Nicks spent her first two years in L.A. juggling songwriting with cleaning houses and waitressing — while Buckingham filled his days with smoking hash and writing music. She was willing to do the drudgery and put up with an increasingly verbally, and sometimes physically, abusive boyfriend because she believed it would be short-lived. Indeed, by 1973, they had a record deal with Anthem Records and released their first album, the eponymously titled, *Buckingham Nicks*. It went almost nowhere.

Just as our heroine faced a return to serving up Big Boy combo plates, Mick Fleetwood entered the picture. The beleaguered head of the British blues band Fleetwood Mac had just lost front man Bob Welch — who had already been a replacement for two others guitarists, founder Peter Green and later Jeremy Spencer. Fleetwood had some gigs looming and immediately recruited the American guitarist and his attractive girlfriend to round out the band.

The succeeding half-decade — featuring a lineup of Fleetwood (drums), John McVie (bass), Christine McVie (keyboards/vocals), Nicks (vocals) and Buckingham (guitar/vocals) — would be Fleetwood Mac's glory years. Starting with the album *Fleetwood Mac* (1975) and progressing through *Rumors* (1977) and, to a lesser degree, *Tusk* (1979), the band would ride the top of the charts, with Nicks' songs, "Rhiannon," "Dreams," "Gold Dust Woman" and "Sara," predominating.

Davis gives us a pretty good view of what it was like in the studio and on the road with the famously fractious band — and their ever-changing alliances — during those years. The McVies broke up. Christine had an affair with the sound man while John drank. Nicks and Buckingham broke up. Nicks surrounded herself with an ever-widening coterie of girlfriends, got a boob job and had affairs with Fleetwood, Don Henley and others. Buckingham started a relationship with the recording studio's receptionist and raged uncontrollably — over loss of control and egoistic fury that Nicks, not he, was the fan favorite. Fleetwood filed for divorce from his wife, slept with Nicks and one of Nicks' friends, all while attempting to hold the music machine together. And they all spent too much money — on things like redecorating hotel rooms for short tour stays, on houses and cars and on cocaine. They sucked up a lot of cocaine.

The author exhaustively recounts every fight, toot and affair from this era employing interviews published by other writers and a few he conducted with the band (but notably, not Nicks) while writing Fleetwood's 1991 "autobiography," *Fleetwood: My Life and Adventures in Fleetwood Mac*. The anecdotes illuminate the chaos. Yet the minutia of the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll playbook begins to wear. One can hardly wait for that golden, but awful era to pass so that we can get on with Nicks' solo career.

The next phase of her life, according to Davis, "had its beginning in Stevie's new clothes." With the help of her costume designer, Nicks switched from witchy black ensembles to looser, more colorful clothing made of "crepe, leather organza, satins." Really? It began with more organza? Not with the realization that she didn't want to be abused by Buckingham anymore?

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Stevie Nicks, 1977

> Surely, there is more to this wildly successful woman who won the adulation of millions with a little poetry and a shawl.

More saliently, in 1979, she met publicist Danny Goldberg, who, along with Paul Fishkin (who Nicks also dated), would help her found Modern Records, the label under which she released her first solo effort, *Belladonna*. It was her manager, Irving Azoff, who connected her with Tom Petty — beginning a long association with the musician and his band, The Heartbreakers — and Petty who then connected her with legendary producer Jimmy Iovine. Iovine would steer the Nicks ship, taking "control of Stevie's recording sessions with a steely will," and more intimately, as her boyfriend for the next few years.

Belladonna put Nicks at the top of the *Billboard* charts in 1981. But she was also committed to travel to France to make a fourth Fleetwood Mac album, *Mirage*. In fact, during her entire career, Nicks would juggle her solo work with her Mac duties.

It was at this point, weary, in a drafty French chateau, that Nicks realized she was much more famous than her bandmates — most particularly, her ex-boyfriend Buckingham — and began a realignment of the power dynamics. Flexing her new-found muscle would lead to years of break-ups and reconciliations within the group but would somehow also produce 40-more-years-worth of music.

Nicks spent the rest of the 1980s engaged in a flurry of successful and/or messy ventures including: marrying her deceased best friend's widower (annulled after three months); having a relationship with "the love of her life," Joe Walsh; investing in a concert promotion business; and releasing four solo albums that produced a dozen songs that charted in the *Billboard* Hot 100.

Significantly, she also checked herself into the Betty Ford Clinic in Rancho Mirage, California after years of cocaine abuse had left her with a hole in her nasal passage. She ended the decade battered, but coke-free.

Then came the 1990s, during which the formerly-diminutive pixie would balloon to "175 pounds and was smoking three packs of mentholated Kool cigarettes per day." This deterioration was partly the result of Nicks having become addicted to Klonopin. A psychiatrist had prescribed the powerful tranquilizer on the heels of her stay at Betty Ford. She spent the next seven years (ages 39-45) stumbling around in a haze.

'"That was the worst period of my life. They stole my forties. I might have met someone, had a child, become a mother, made some great music,"' Nicks explained after another medical withdrawal.

The music she made during the Klonopin era had declined in quality but still sold. Yet, reviews of contemporaneous tours emphasized her weight and personal problems over the songs. Nicks was mortified. She quit smoking, bought a treadmill and went on a diet. '"I would never sing in front of people looking like that again,"' she said. She also had her breast implants removed.

By the time she hit her 50s, a clear-headed and healthy Nicks was ready to complete

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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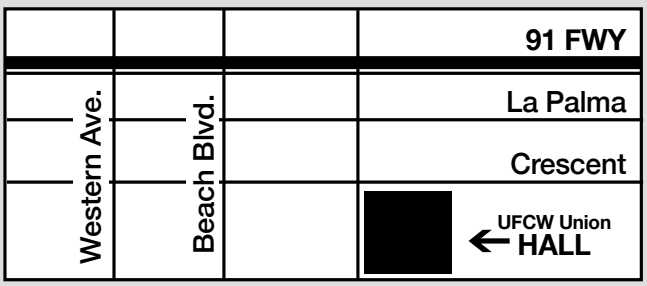

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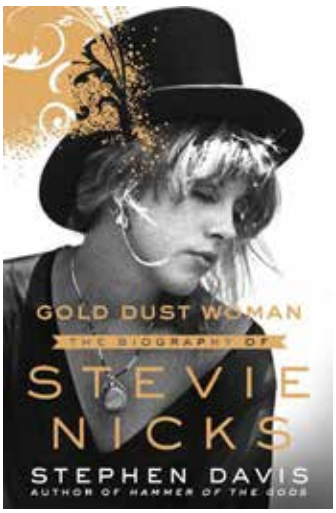
the rehabilitation of her image. In part, she would do what other aging artists had done, and aligned herself with younger talents. In Nicks' case, it was Sheryl Crow with whom she would record and tour. Crow, like many female musicians, (notably The Dixie Chicks) grew up admiring Nicks. She also worked with Dave Stewart, of Eurhythmics fame, who produced her seventh solo turn, *In Your Dreams*. This era of resurgence would also see Fleetwood Mac successfully reunited after years of estrangement, in 2015. The tours that followed would play to sell-out stadiums across the globe. And, just last year, in 2017, she teamed up with another old broad, Chrissy Hynde, for a world tour. Maybe she was not so embarrassing after all.

Fan or no, for a reader who wants to understand the definitive Stevie Nicks story, *Gold Dust Woman* has little in the way of real insight to offer. While the author expounds about backstage shenanigans and the motivations for Nicks' songs — like the time she was abandoned by Buckingham at an Aspen resort which led to "Landslide;" or the rainy day in Sausalito that led to the rain washing her free in "Dreams;" and, of course, the origins of the Welch witch, "Rhiannon" — it's fairly dull reading.

The beauty of a songwriter like Nicks' work is in its obscurity. Her songs are often a string of unfinished thoughts held together only by the amazing musicianship of her band members and her singular, plaintive vocals. To know the nitty-gritty about where she was, or what Davis thinks she was thinking when she wrote a song or pirouetted through a video does not illuminate so much as it seems boringly beside-the-point.



Most importantly, what is lacking from this biography is the sound of Nicks' voice. (Or, for that matter, the voices of those with whom she is closest.) While there are descriptions of her actions, they convey no palpable feeling of agency. While we are told she had a large circle of friends and lovers, there are no reflections of the kind of personal appeal that would explain why those friends hung around all night and did so for decades. (Was she fun? Was it just the free coke?) The Stevie Nicks who emerges from the musty, second-hand quotes is almost entirely petulant, humorless and moons like a teenager over the guys enlisted to steer her career. Surely, there is more to this wildly successful woman who won the adulation of millions with a little poetry and a shawl, started her own record label and resurrected herself from the ashes more than once. I think so.

If we're left with anything that sounds like a truism, it's that Stevie Nicks — who is turning 70 this year — is, as Christine McVie once put it, '"a tough little thing."' That's a paltry insight for a 300-page investment.

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Both Sides of the Sky, a new album from the Jimi Hendrix vaults

Many of these surviving studio recordings find Hendrix working with varying lineups of musicians — including surprises like Stephen Stills and Joni Mitchell

BY RICHIE UNTERBERGER

FOR A GUY WHO ONLY PUT out three true, studio albums during his lifetime, the Jimi Hendrix discography has become massive. Almost 50 years after his death, compilations of unreleased recordings continue to emerge from the vault, testifying both to his prolific studio output and the continued hunger for more Hendrix. *Both Sides of the Sky* is the latest such excavation, and will both relieve some of that hunger and still leave the listener somewhat unsatisfied.

Both Sides of the Sky is, according to leading Hendrix historian John McDermott's liner notes, "the third volume in a trilogy of albums [following 2010's *Valleys of Neptune* and 2013's *People, Hell & Angels*] intended to present the best and most significant unissued studio recordings remaining in the Hendrix archive." To its credit it does not, like so many earlier releases, employ posthumous overdubs, sometimes by musicians who didn't even work with Jimi. And while much unreleased Hendrix has circulated on bootlegs, the sound is clear and of a higher standard than most unofficial discs. Three of the thirteen tracks ("Georgia Blues," "Things I Used to Do," and "Power of Soul") were actually previously issued, but they're obscure enough to be new to many fans, and even "Power of Soul" is a previously unavailable extended version.

Still, it's like listening to bootlegged takes with high-grade fidelity and packaging, because it's a bit of a jumble of unrelated tracks, rather than something that would have cohered into an album (or even comprise an alternative version of an album). Most of the cuts are from 1969 and 1970 (though there are a couple 1968 recordings), a time when Jimi was struggling to concoct a studio follow-up to his last album with the original Experience, 1968's *Electric Ladyland*. This is by no means a quasi-simulation of what would have been his next LP (to which the 1997 compilation *First Rays of the New Rising Sun* probably comes closest), but does concentrate on material laid down during that era.

Jimi Hendrix

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Like much of his work that survives from that time, these find Hendrix working with varying lineups of musicians and struggling to some degree to find some direction. The tunes are often, though not always, bluesier on the whole than his Experience recordings, and a couple ("Things I Used to Do" and "Mannish Boy") are covers of actual blues classics. But although Jimi's instrumental prowess remained awesome, his songwriting and arrangements lacked the focus that had characterized his first three albums.

The best songs on *Both Sides of the Sky* tend to be the ones that have been available in different versions. The one here of "Lover Man" from December 15, 1969, with Band of Gypsys rhythm section Billy Cox on bass and Buddy Miles on drums, is a clear highlight. Dynamic and propulsive, it has the razor-sharp bounce of the best blues-rock, along the lines of the cover of Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor" that kicked off his Monterey Pop Festival set. Dig especially the part in the instrumental break where the trio unexpectedly detours into a takeoff on the "Batman" riff, not overdoing the novelty before heading back into the heart of the tune — which, unlike many tracks Hendrix cut during this period, doesn't overstay its welcome; clocking in at a concise three minutes.

Along the same bluesy lines, though less impressive, is "Hear My Train a 'Comin'," the sole number here to feature all three members of the original Jimi Hendrix Experience. There have been live acoustic and electric versions on previous releases, and this one sits between those in its seven-minute length, though it's ultimately a rather average and conventional workout compared to his more imaginative blues compositions.

One of the most familiar songs here is "Stepping Stone," which Band of Gypsys put on a 1970 single. Recorded in November 1969, this considerably shorter (by a minute) version was cut a few months earlier than the one on the 45, and has a less funk-inclined, more stripped-down feel. It's kind of cool, but sounds a little like a rehearsal compared to the single, which has fuller vocals in particular.

Some of the other songs on *Both Sides of the Sky*, alas, are more meandering and less memorable. "Power of Soul" seems like a work in progress, with a too-long intro on which Hendrix wordlessly scats his vocals, and a

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too-long final portion in which he seems to be running out of ideas for lyrics. The moody instrumental "Jungle," on which Miles is his sole accompanist, is a nicely atmospheric showcase for his work on Uni-Vibe tone-control pedal, but sounds like a backing track awaiting lyrics that never came. As the liner notes point out, it also shows the influence of Curtis Mayfield, from whose guitar playing Hendrix drew some of his more delicate work.

Another song that showed some promise, but was evidently left to linger, was "Send My Love to Linda," recorded on January 16, 1970. There's an unplugged feel to the first part of the song, on which Jimi's guitar supplies most of the anchor to the melancholy, slightly ominous melody before Cox and Miles power a full rock arrangement on the second half of the track. Hendrix even fools around with flamenco-like riffs at the beginning of the cut. It actually sounds more creative than much of the material he was writing at the time, but Jimi was often having a hard time taking his sketches to the finish line, and this seems like one of numerous examples.

Both onstage and in the studio, Hendrix was often eager to play with musicians from outside the Experience and Band of Gypsys, and a few of the tracks on this CD feature unusual guests. Johnny Winter handles second guitar, with a rhythm section of Dallas Taylor (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's first drummer) and Billy Cox, on an adequate cover of Guitar Slim's "Things I Used to Do." It could be argued, however, that any guitar hero guesting on a Hendrix track makes for one guitarist too many.

"Georgia Blues," though recorded in March 1969, is something of a throwback to Hendrix's days as a sideman to a gaggle of soul, blues, and R&B musicians. Indeed, it's more a track on which Hendrix guests than one on which he uses guests, as Lonnie Youngblood takes the vocals and plays saxophone, with a drummer, bassist, and organist whose names will be unfamiliar

to everyone. Previously available on the 2005 compilation *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues: Jimi Hendrix*, this routine blues-soul effort is a rather unmemorable footnote to Jimi's discography.

More interesting are two September 30, 1969 tracks on which fellow superstar Stephen Stills not so much guests as takes over. With Hendrix, Mitch Mitchell and pianist Duane Hitchings, Stills sings and plays organ on "$20 Fine," an original composition of his that he would not release with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, or indeed on any disc. The energetic, mid-tempo, slightly unfinished-sounding tune is kind of by-numbers late-'60s Stills. But, both Hendrix and (more particularly) Stills completists won't be able to find it anywhere else.

Better is a Stills-led version, from the same day, of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock," soon to be a hit for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. This take (with Stills on vocals and organ, Hendrix on bass, and Miles on drums) lacks the trademark harmonies of CSNY's famous version, but is quite respectable and has a fine, committed Stills vocal, even if the arrangement's a little on the basic side. It also carries considerable historical interest as it's probably the first studio recording of this song by anyone, predating CSNY's recording for the *Déjà Vu* album. Mitchell had, after all, only written the song a few weeks before this session, shortly after the actual Woodstock festival (at which both Hendrix and CSNY played) took place in August 1969.

Just two tracks on *Both Sides of the Sky* predate 1969. Taped on

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May 2, 1968, the spooky instrumental "Cherokee Mist" features only Hendrix and Mitchell. Other versions have come out on compilations, and this one is notable for Jimi's work on wah-wah, feedback, and, more unusually, the Coral electric sitar. Unlike some other instrumental outtakes in the Hendrix catalog, it doesn't sound like a backing track awaiting lyrics/vocals, and works effectively as a wordless mood piece — if more so in the first part of the seven-minute track than the more drifting final three minutes.

Another 1968 outtake on *Both Sides of the Sky* also features only Hendrix and Mitchell, and was recorded on January 28 of that year. As "Angel," the song (here titled "Sweet Angel") was one of the best Hendrix compositions to be released after his death, first emerging on the 1971 LP *The Cry of Love*. He'd been developing it for more than two years, however, though this early version is instrumental. In that sense, it's a backing track that's missing lyrics, with Hendrix playing not just guitar, but also bass and, more unexpectedly, vibraphone. Such is the strength of the melody that even this instrumental sketch has an engaging, shimmering beauty, though it would gain a great deal of strength when Hendrix put lyrics and vocals onto the famous later version.

Just as "Angel" doesn't compare to "Sweet Angel," so *Both Sides of the Sky* does not compare to Hendrix's proper studio albums, or even his best live recordings and compilations. It's nonetheless an interesting adjunct to his core discography, even if it lacks stone classics or revelatory insights into previously undocumented directions. If it's the last of a trilogy of "the best and most significant unissued studio recordings remaining in the Hendrix archive," one wonders if there's anything comparable left even in the leftovers — though with the consistent mining of Jimi's legacy by the Hendrix estate, you can never count that out.

1960s British folk quintet, Pentangle, get a new boxed set

Cherry Red release includes all six LPs and 45 bonus tracks

BY RICHIE UNTERBERGER

Pentangle, March 1969, Netherlands

JAC. DE NIJS / ANEFO / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ALONG WITH FAIRPORT Convention, Pentangle were the top British folk-rock group of the late 1960s and early 1970s. True, folk-rock was a label Pentangle were uncomfortable with, and there wasn't nearly as much rock as folk in their sound. There was also a lot of jazz and blues, and bits of gospel, world music, and even pop. But if you have to give Pentangle a label, folk-rock fits them about as well as any. It's certainly not just folk music, although the band boasted arguably the two best folk guitarists in Britain in Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, along with one of the best British folk singers (Jacqui McShee) and the stellar jazz-bluesy rhythm section of bassist Danny Thompson and Terry Cox.

Pentangle recorded six LPs with their original lineup between 1968 and 1972 prior to breaking up in 1973 (though they sporadically reformed in different versions in later years). If a bit unnervingly uneven, these records were often exhilarating, and always as eclectic as any folk-based music then or since. All six of them are in the recent Cherry Red seven-CD box *The Albums*, which adds a whopping 54 bonus tracks, 22 of them previously unreleased. For all its heft, it doesn't have everything the original lineup recorded (more on which later). But with the addition of all of these alternate takes, outtakes, live recordings, and their few non-LP singles, this is a bigger box than 2007's four-CD *The Time Has Come*. It's also more fully representative of the group, including as it does all of the studio and live sides they released before their 1973 split.

Pentangle fans devoted enough to spring for this box will naturally be most interested in the bonus cuts, as they're likely to have all or most of the music from the original six LPs. Still, a broad overview of those six LPs — which form the basis of each of the seven CDs (seven because 1968's *Sweet Child* was a double LP) — is helpful before getting into that nitty-gritty.

The quintet was undoubtedly at their best on their first three LPs, starting with 1968's debut *The Pentangle*, which introduced a swinging, at times rocking acoustic blend that had never been heard on either side of the Atlantic. Their adaptations of the traditional folk songs "Let No Man Steal Your Thyme" and "Bruton Town" both remained true to those standards' spirit and made them far more exciting to non-purists than any previous versions. "Pentangling" was a good showcase for their instrumental virtuosity and ability to stretch and semi-improvise at some length without getting boring. "Hear My Call," originally a more gospel-grounded Staple Singers tune, signified their willingness to put their stamp on more contemporary material, as well as (like many of their songs) forefront McShee's soaring, pure vocals. Not every track was up to the level of these highlights, but it was an exciting, invigorating start.

Divided into a live recording (at London's Royal Festival Hall on June 29, 1968) on its first disc and studio recordings for its second, Sweet Child was as eclectic as any folk-rock album, and indeed one of the most eclectic LPs of any kind from the late '60s. That's particularly true of the live half, encompassing spirituals, Charles Mingus compositions, a Christmas song, blues, traditional British folk and original material. That doesn't mean it found the group at their very best — the execution is sometimes a little dainty and restrained, though the audience seems to love every performance. The studio portion might not have been a big advance over their debut LP, but included a

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candidate for the best folk-rock instrumental in the mesmerizing "In Time," with riveting interplay between Jansch and Renbourn, and the jazz-bluesish original "I've Got a Feeling," another of McShee's highwater marks.

Pentangle reached their peak on 1969's *Basket of Light*, one of the greatest folk-rock albums. Nearly every track is bold and daring, yet concise and cutting, from the riveting, frenetic "Light Flight" (a small UK hit) and the stately rendition of the folk warhorse "Once I Had a Sweetheart" to the almost Gregorian "Lyke-Wake Dirge" and the bouncy original "Springtime Promises." There's even a successful mutation of the girl group hit "Sally Go Round the Roses." There's a sense of the musicians at the edge, taking risks with how far they could take British folk outside its boundaries with almost jazz-like instrumental interaction and adventurous vocal harmonies, but never so far as to abandon a folk core. Here's also the place to mention that though McShee was their most prominent singer, Jansch added a lot to their balance with his earthier, bluesier vocal leads, on both backup and occasional lead.

As with so many bands, that breathtaking peak couldn't be maintained. Like Fairport Convention, Pentangle retreated from their excursions into new territory, instead turning to traditional folk for the bulk of their repertoire, starting with 1970's *Cruel Sister*. Of course, they had always done a lot of traditional folk, but now they were doing it more traditionally and with modernized folk-rock arrangements. Perhaps fatigue was draining their reserves of original material; Jansch and Renbourn were maintaining active solo recording careers, even as Pentangle kept to a hectic studio and concert schedule.

Cruel Sister and its follow-ups, *Reflection* (1971) and *Solomon's Seal* (1972), have their champions, including the writers who penned the essays on these LPs in this box's extensive booklet. And they do include some good tracks — *Solomon's Seal*'s doleful "No Love Is Sorrow," featuring a dual lead vocal from Jansch and McShee, is one of their most haunting original songs. They also took the unusual, even reckless, step of putting an 18-minute version of "Jack Orion" on *Cruel Sister*. They continued to add unusual touches to their acoustic base, including some sitar and occasional electric guitar. But it's not just the repertoire that's less interesting on these final three albums. The execution isn't as lively or imaginative either, almost as though the early-'70s burnout referred to in some Pentangle literature spilled over into their studio sessions.

Pentangle fans already know about these albums, even if they might not always agree with my assessments. They'll be more curious about the material on this box they're likely not to have been heard, starting with the 22 unreleased tracks. Yet, like many bonus items, they're more interesting than electrifying, including quite a few alternate or live versions that aren't too different from, and/or aren't as good as, the familiar ones. Some are more interesting than others, starting with two from their first studio session in August 1967, "I Got a Feeling" (re-recorded for Sweet Child as "I've Got a Feeling") and "Market Song." In contrast to the *Sweet Child* version, the first attempt at "I Got a Feeling" is clumsy, almost pop-blues-rock, indicating that it took them a while to get comfortable with both their nascent folk-rock style and more at ease in the studio itself. "Market Song" is also unrefined (with an uncharacteristic electric blues-rock guitar solo), but they'd find their feet soon enough.

Other highlights from the unreleased batch include a quite good full-band version of Cox's spooky "Moon Dog," done on *Sweet Child* as a Cox solo track with just vocals and spare percussion. The full-band arrangement, in contrast, features McShee's vocals, and comes closer to an equal mix of folk and rock than most of their work, though the sound quality

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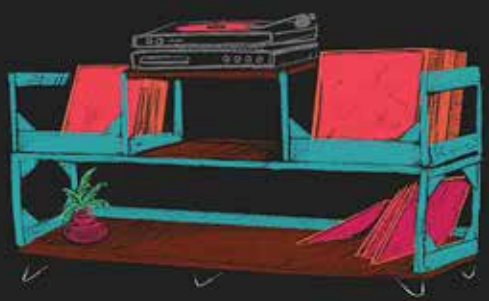

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is a bit lower than usual, deriving (according to the liners) "from an imperfect tape source." Three cuts from an Aberdeen concert on March 26, 1970 include live versions of their early standouts "Light Flight" and "Pentangling." The Reflection outtake "Wondrous Love," an American Shaker hymn, has a mesmerizing somber, almost incantantional feel (with what sounds like a faint fuzz guitar in the background) that would have made it a standout on the LP had it been included. At the less impressive end of the spectrum, three November 1972 live numbers from Guildford Civic Hall were taken from an audience recording, and suffer from substandard sound quality.

The 32 other tracks on this box that did not appear on the original versions of the first six Pentangle LPs are likewise not all that notable, at least relative to what was cleared for official release. You'd have to be a pretty big Pentangle fan to already have all of these cuts on other releases, but quite a few have been out as bonus tracks on the 2001 Castle CD editions of their first three albums; on Renbourn's 1972 solo LP *Faro Annie*; or on the box *The Time Has Come*. The obvious standouts are the three that originally appeared as non-LP tracks on singles, including their ingratiating 1968 debut 45 "Travellin' Song" (dressed up with strings, although unadorned live versions are easily findable on video, as well as on one of the bonus concert items for *Sweet Child*). The 1969 B-sides "Cold Mountain" and "I Saw An Angel" are here too (as bonuses on the *Basket of Light* disc), and are decent cuts in line with their late-'60s sound, though not lost gems.

It's interesting to hear these extras to round out our picture of Pentangle's prolific first half-dozen years, but sometimes it's obvious why they didn't come out at the time. In common with some other folk-rock groups, their attempts at straight blues could be lame. The live version of "Travellin' Song" from Festival Hall, if it was considered for inclusion on *Sweet Child*, likely failed to pass inspection when Jansch and McShee awkwardly navigated some of their vocal harmonies.

It seems improbable that a 115-track collection could miss a fair amount of Pentangle recordings from this period, but such is the case, though fortunately those are easily available elsewhere. For starters, there are CDs of BBC broadcasts from 1968-72 on Live at the BBC and the two-disc *The Lost Broadcasts* 1968-1972 (which has all but six of the tracks from *Live at the BBC*). The box set *The Time Has Come* has a bit more than a CD's worth of additional live, TV, and soundtrack recordings that don't appear on this newer box. Recordings from their show at the Berkeley Community Theatre on May 29, 1970 are very good, and have long been in circulation (and can currently be heard on concervault.com). And we're not even counting a fair amount of live footage of the group from TV programs of the late 1960s and early 1970s, much of which hasn't made it to DVD.

The Cherry Red *The Albums* box, however, has the core of their legacy, embellished with almost as many extras as could fit on the CDs (with the exception of the relatively short *Solomon's Seal* disc, which adds just three live tracks). The CD-sized box has an 88-page booklet with a wealth of recording information and vintage photos and memorabilia, along with many quotes from interviews with Jansch, Renbourn, and McShee. There's also a detailed chronology, although the individual album essays are uneven. The discs are housed in individual sleeves duplicating the original artwork, including the gatefolds that some of the LPs boasted. It adds up to a worthy, though not quite all-inclusive, monument to the legacy of a band whose brilliantly British folk-rock blend has never been matched, or even replicated.

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Sonny Rollins Goes *Way Out West*

BY ARMAND LEWIS

IN THE 1860S, *NEW YORK TRIBUNE* editor Horace Greeley saw the opening and settlement of the American West as an unprecedented opportunity and famously wrote in an editorial "Go West, young man."

One hundred years later, people were still heeding that call. And in early 1957, up- and- coming New York saxophonist Sonny Rollins would record one of the definitive modern jazz LPs about as far west as he could go at the time.

In early 1957, Rollins found himself touring with the Max Roach group in Los Angeles, where he caught the ear of Contemporary Records producer Lester Koenig. The resulting album, "Way Out West," proved to be not only one of Rollins' first masterpieces, but also an iconic hard- bop LP as well as the ultimate "West Coast" jazz album.

Continuously in print since its initial release, "Way Out West" has now been expanded into a two- LP definitive set featuring unissued takes and studio conversation as well as extensive liner notes and rare photos from renowned photographer William Claxton.

The first LP of Sonny Rollins – Way Out West: Deluxe Edition (Craft 21) presents the original LP stunningly re-mastered from the original tapes recorded in one long overnight session on March 7, 1957.

Rollins chose as his drummer fellow New Yorker Shelly Manne. Manne was in fact already one of Contemporary's leading stars, having recorded a string of popular albums with his own groups. A master percussionist, Manne could provide support for anyone from Benny Goodman to Ornette Coleman — both of whom would record with him at one time or another.

The equally versatile Ray Brown was chosen for the bass chair. Originally from Pittsburgh, Brown's first major gig was with Dizzy Gillespie's big band. By the early 1950s the bassist was the go- to bassist for seemingly half the jazz LPs made on both coasts. It's somewhat ironic that an album that has been called a "West Coast Jazz" record was played entirely by East Coast musicians.

For the piano seat, Sonny Rollins chose no one. Feeling the need (and the opportunity) to stretch out, Rollins felt omitting the piano meant "I could have the rhythmic support of a drummer and then I could have the harmonic support of the bassist. That's the thing: it wouldn't be more intrusive on what I was playing"

In spite of its title, the LP features only two country/ western tunes, neither of which are played in the country music style of the period. On "I'm an Old Cowhand" Manne starts off with a playful and misleading imitation of a horse's "clip- clop" gait before Rollins and Brown take the tune into as modern a style as one could ask for. Likewise,

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RECORD SHOW CALENDAR

Calendar listings are free and printed on a space available basis. Unsolicited materials cannot be returned. Please contact conventions to verify the information! Send your calendar listings to ***Record Collector News****: jim@recordcollectornews.com*

SUNDAY APRIL 1

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. FREE admission. Parking $2

Los Angeles, CA. Rock 'n' Roll Flea Market. The Regent 448 S Main St Free All Ages rnrflea@gmail.com

SUNDAY APRIL 7

Los Angeles, CA. LA Record Fair. Ali Banquet Halls 3420 W Jefferson Blvd. 12-6pm. $5. larecordfair@gmail.com

SATURDAY APRIL 14

Chicago, IL. CHIRP Record Fair & Other Delights. Plumbers Union Hall 1340 W Washington Ave $9. 8am-6pm. 312-636-2691

SUNDAY APRIL 15

Canby, OR. Record Bonanza Ackerman School, 350 S.W. 13th $3. 10am-4pm, 503-651-2780

Los Angeles, CA. Smorgasburg LA Record Fair. Row DTLA 787 Alameda St Free. 10am-4pm Beatswapmeet@gmail.com

SATURDAY APRIL 21

Countryside, IL. SW Chicago Record Show 6201 Joliet Rd, $3. 10am-4pm. 847-409-9656

FRIDAY APRIL 27

Brooklyn, NY. 2008 WFMU Record Fair. 3 Day Show! Brooklyn Expo Center. 79 Franklin Street, Greenpoint $7, $pm-10pm. 201-521-1416

SATURDAY APRIL 28

Brooklyn, NY. 2008 WFMU Record Fair. 3 Day Show! Brooklyn Expo Center. 79 Franklin Street Greenpoint $7, $pm-10pm. 201-521-1416

SUNDAY APRIL 29

Buena Park, CA. Greater Orange County Record Show. UFCW Union Hall – 8530 Stanton Ave. $3. 10am-3pm. 626-665-4448

Brooklyn, NY. 2008 WFMU Record Fair. 3 Day Show! Brooklyn Expo Center. 79 Franklin Street Greenpoint $7, $pm-10pm. 201-521-1416

Eugene, OR. Top Score Record Show Level Up Arcade 13th and Oak, Free. 12/5pm, 207-521-1416

Seattle Lake City WA. Lake City Record Show. Lake City Community Center 12531 28th Ave N. E. Seattle 98125 Free. 10am-4pm. 206-850-1588

SUNDAY MAY 6

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. FREE admission. Parking $2

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

on "Wagon Wheels" a brief western style introduction leads into a hard- bop rendition of the highest caliber.

Three of the remaining tunes are Rollins originals, which — along with the one standard, Duke Ellington's ballad "Solitude" — could have easily been recorded for one of Rollins' New York made Prestige albums. The second LP in this package features alternate takes of most of the tunes on the first LP along with studio chatter between Rollins and the rest of the people involved with the project.

In keeping with the Western theme, the famous cover pictures Rollins in full cowboy regalia — complete with holster and pistol on one side and saxophone under his arm on the other. Initially criticized as being cheesy and commercially motivated, the photo has become somewhat iconic.

A big fan of the old Western movies that played late night TV at the time, the photo was Rollins' own idea as a way to celebrate the old movies he loved as well as commemorate his first trip west. He later said that "I was really living out my Lone Ranger thing... I wanted to leave the impression that I was the top gun in town... like Ken Maynard" This new package features alternate Claxton photos taken that day.

> "I was really living out my Lone Ranger thing..."
> SONNY ROLLINS

Later on, *Way Out West* would be called one of the first "concept albums," though the phrase did not exist in 1957. With its audiophile re- mastering, extra tracks and photos, Sonny Rollins – *Way Out West: Deluxe Edition* completes the concept like never before.

Armand Lewis buys and sells rare Jazz LPs. He can be reached at mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

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